

Public Law 103-217
103d Congress

Joint Resolution

Feb. 22, 1994
[S.J. Res. 119]

To designate the month of March 1994 as "Irish-American Heritage Month".

- Whereas the first Irish emigrants arrived in America as early as 1621;
- Whereas 9 of the generals who served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution were Irish born;
- Whereas Commodore John Barry of County Wexford, Ireland, served brilliantly in the Continental Navy and is widely regarded as the father of the American Navy;
- Whereas James Smith, George Taylor, Matthew Thornton, and Charles Thomson, 4 of the individuals who signed the Declaration of Independence, were Irish born and 9 other signers were of Irish ancestry;
- Whereas the contributions of the Irish to America's victory in the American Revolution led Lord Mountjoy to exclaim in the British Parliament that "America was lost by the Irish emigrants";
- Whereas beginning at the time of the potato blight and famine in Ireland in 1845, over 700,000 Irish immigrants came to the United States during the 1840's, 900,000 during the 1850's, and over 300,000 in each decade through 1910;
- Whereas Irish Americans participated heavily in the industrial and economic development of America during the nineteenth century, building our cities and canals and the railroads that expanded the Nation to the West;
- Whereas even today, it is said that under every railroad tie an Irishman is buried;
- Whereas the Irish contributed greatly to the development of the labor movement in the United States, including the establishment of the American Miners Association in 1861;
- Whereas nearly 150,000 natives of Ireland served in the Union forces during the Civil War;
- Whereas more than 500 members of the Irish Brigade were killed while fighting for the Union in the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, a date that has been called the bloodiest day in American history;
- Whereas the Irish Brigade fought courageously in several other Civil War battles including Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Yorktown, Fair Oaks, Gaines Mill, Allen's Farm, Savage Station, White Oak Bridge, Glendale, Malvern Hill, Gettysburg, and Bristow Station;
- Whereas in 1892, Annie Moore from County Cork, Ireland, at age 15 became the first immigrant to pass through Ellis Island;

Whereas Irish Americans have made numerous contributions to the arts and to sports, as exemplified by the achievements of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Eugene O'Neill, Helen Hayes, Georgia O'Keefe, John L. Sullivan, and Connie Mack;

Whereas the first woman to serve as the organizer of the American Federation of Labor was Mary Kennedy O'Sullivan;

Whereas at the beginning of the twentieth century, many of the school teachers in America's largest cities were Irish American women;

Whereas President John F. Kennedy was the first American President to visit Ireland during his term in office;

Whereas Irish Americans, including Kathryn Sullivan, the first American woman to walk in space, and Christa Corrigan McAuliffe, America's first school teacher in space who perished on the Challenger mission, have bravely served as America's pioneers in space;

Whereas more than 200 Irish Americans have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor;

Whereas President William Jefferson Clinton is the nineteenth American President of Irish ancestry;

Whereas 37 United States governors and mayors designated March 1993 as "Irish-American Heritage Month"; and

Whereas 44 million Americans are of Irish ancestry: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the month of March 1994 is designated as "Irish-American Heritage Month". The President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved February 22, 1994.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 119:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Vol. 139 (1993): Oct. 28, considered and passed Senate.

Vol. 140 (1994): Feb. 8, considered and passed House.